



**Northeast
Florida
Regional
Council**

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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The Northeast Florida Regional Council Regional Awards

In 2003, in response to the high level of Regional Excellence in a variety of critical arenas, the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) was pleased to launch a Regional Leadership Awards Program. The December 5th event marks the twelfth year the Awards Ceremony has been held in conjunction with a reception honoring elected officials throughout the Region.

The Regional Awards recognition program is anchored by the **Regional Leadership Award**. This year's recipient of the Northeast Florida Regional Council – Regional Leadership Award is **Dr. A. Quinton White**.

Dr. A. Quinton White, PhD receives Regional Leadership Award



From left to right: NEFRC President Kenny Eubanks, Dr. A. Quinton White, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple

Dr. A Quinton White's public service is highlighted by his willingness to serve the Region as it seeks to choose a bright future. He chaired the **Natural Resources Committee** of the **Regional Community Institute** as they created **First Coast Vision, a 50 year vision** for growth and development in the seven county Northeast Florida Region. This was used to enhance the relevancy of the **Strategic Regional Policy Plan update of 2013**. He is a longstanding and dedicated member of the Board of Directors of the Regional Community Institute, the non-profit that undertakes policy work for the Northeast Florida Regional Council. He provides expertise to the **Jacksonville Waterways Commission**, especially as it pertains to their Manatee Protection Plan. He writes a monthly column for the Florida Times Union newspaper. He is a member of the **Jacksonville Port Task Force**, which focuses on Jaxport's strategic priorities including the channel deepening project which would allow for larger ships to access the port. As the Founding Executive Director of the Marine Science Research Institute, Dr. White was charged with establishing an interdisciplinary educational and research facility on the **Jacksonville University** campus. Prior to his time as Executive Director, Dr. White was **Dean of the JU College of Arts and Sciences** and Chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics.



From left to right: Dr. A. Quinton White and Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown, who accepted the Special Achievement Award.

City of Jacksonville receives Special Achievement Award



From left to right: NEFRC President Kenny Eubanks, Maria Hane, Museum of Science and History, Superintendent of the Timucuan Preserve Barbara Goodman, Jacksonville Mayor Alvin Brown, Jacksonville City Councilmember Lori Boyer, Dr. Joanne Davis, Duval County Public Schools, Maria Marks, Timucuan Trails Parks Foundation, Jacksonville City Councilmember Jim Love, Michelle Barth, City of Jacksonville Office of the Mayor, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple. Not pictured are representatives of the Jacksonville Historic Society, Jacksonville Public Library, Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra, Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, French Consul General's Office and numerous volunteers.

Mayor Alvin Brown accepted the **Regional Award for Special Achievement** on behalf of the City of Jacksonville and local, state and federal partners to commemorate the 450th anniversary of French colonists in Jacksonville. The effort **began in 2012** with the May 1st anniversary of the landing of French Huguenot Captain Jean Ribault, a commemoration which kicked off the **State of Florida's Viva Florida 500** effort. This year commemorates the **450th anniversary of the founding of Fort Caroline** with the National Park Service, the first French settlement in the United States, and the 450th anniversary of the first documented Thanksgiving between Europeans and Native Americans, with several unique events including the **opening of the France-Florida Cultural Center at Visit Jacksonville**. Because of this exemplary **public-private** partnership effort, the State of Florida now boasts a Florida French Heritage Trail raising the profile of Northeast Florida as an international travel and business destination.

Other Regional Award winners recognized at the event were:

Regional Award for Excellence in Economic Development and Tourism: City of Palatka Riverfront Park Revitalization

Palatka's City Commission embraced revitalization of the downtown riverfront and leveraged close to \$5 million dollars in federal, state, private and nonprofit funding to create the centerpiece Riverfront Park. The infrastructure improvements, landscaping, ramp facilities, have attracted private investment in hotel development and the St. Johns River Center funded by Georgia-Pacific. Lastly two replica paddlewheelers will soon be plying the river between Crescent City, Murphy's Island and Palatka.



From left to right: NEFRC President Kenny Eubanks, from the City of Palatka Jonathan Griffith, Mayor Vernon Myers, Michael Czymbor, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple.

The Regional Award for Excellence in Adaptive Reuse: City of Palatka and the Water Works Environmental Center

Under a new category to recognize Adaptive Reuse of land and buildings in the Region, the City of Palatka Water Works Environmental Center is the inaugural recipient. The **old water works** building was the principal source of drinking water for the City from **1886 to 1986**, providing up to 1 million gallons of water a day. The Water Works Center provides a place for reflection, community activities, and experiential learning through exhibits and demonstration areas. It is a trail hub to connect the history of William Bartram's contributions and raises environmental awareness and knowledge of local natural systems for the more than 750 school children who visit each year.



From left to right: NEFRC President Kenny Eubanks, Water Works team members Platt Drew, Shann Purinton, Dick Franz, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple.

The Regional Award for Quality of Life: Town of Pomona Park

The Town of Pomona Park is a main street town located along US 17, south of the City of Palatka. The Town of Pomona Park prioritized the health of its residents through the public and private support of the Putnam Family Fitness Center, a non-profit health oriented organization. The Town was recognized by the Florida Department of Health and the Surgeon General as a 2014 Health Weight Community Champion for their efforts, selecting the Town as one of 37 municipalities out of 410 cities this year! And, as a Healthy Weight Champion, the Town of Pomona Park continues to promote physical activities, nutrition, and use leadership to implement health programs.



From left to right: NEFRC President Kenny Eubanks, Mayor John Berquist, Jr. of the Town of Pomona Park, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple.

The Regional Award for Excellence in Education: Quality Education for All Fund

The initiative is a fund set up by a group of local philanthropists to raise and invest \$50 million in private money into Duval County Public Schools, specifically around improving teacher and principal quality in a targeted region of 37 of the lowest performing schools in the district. It is currently in the middle of the first year of their investments. The fund is the culmination of the initiative launched in 2004 by the Community Foundation for Northeast Florida to improve performance of all public school students in Duval County with particular attention to the gaps in achievement between poor and non-poor students, minority and majority students. The Fund focusses investments specifically on programs and initiatives designed to attract and retain high quality teachers and leaders. The Quality Education for All Fund has raised nearly \$40 million.



From left to right: NEFRC President Kenny Eubanks, Imani Hope, Project Director, Quality Education for All Fund, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple.

The Regional Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing: Nassau County Board of County Commissioners and The Reserve Apartments

Nassau County developed an incentive program for affordable housing, which has recently proven to be marketable and transferable to other communities. **The Reserve** apartments seized upon this incentive and constructed 300 market rate units with 39 affordable units through development agreement for **timely construction** and **maintenance of affordability** for 15 years. The Nassau County Affordable Housing program is founded upon regulatory flexibility, reflexive policies and expedited permitting.



From left to right: NEFRC President Kenny Eubanks, Nassau County Planning Director Peter King, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple

The Regional Award for Excellence in Public Safety: City of Palm Coast Fire Department

A two-part initiative to educate residents on the importance of keeping their smoke detectors in good operating order using a free in house service to change out batteries and creating a video. A neighborhood event – serving **300 homes** by changing **2,100 smoke detector batteries** over a 2 week period helped **prevent potential injuries** to residents **from falls** and ensured that residents have fully operational smoke detectors. Riding on the success of the Grand Haven program, the topic of changing smoke detector batteries came up again as the Fire Department and the **City’s Communications & Marketing Division** began planning a new series of **Public Service Announcement videos**. The team created a fun, and very funny, video with a serious message that can be found on YouTube.



From left to right: NEFRC President Kenny Eubanks, Palm Coast Firefighter-Paramedic Colin Craig, Fire Chief Mike Beadle, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple

The Regional Award for Excellence in Environmental Stewardship: City of Palm Coast Utility Department

The City of Palm Coast is an example of how municipalities are approaching water conservation in a globally innovative way through the **Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD)** project. This project is a multifaceted approach to **improving water quality, conserving water and reducing impacts** on water supply. According to Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) staff, they are not aware of another project just like the ZLD project in the State of Florida. The ZLD process will allow the City to **recover and treat nearly 100 percent** of the concentrate produced by the water treatment plan, which is currently being discharge to a surface water body.



From left to right: NEFRC President Kenny Eubanks, Palm Coast Utility Development Manager Stephen Flanagan, Environmental Specialist Brian Matthews, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple

The Regional Award for Excellence in Planning and Growth Management: City of Green Cove Springs

The City created Gateway Corridor/CBD Pilot Grant Program, a public/private partnership to improve the City's Gateway Corridor, US 17. US 17 is the Main Street for the City and is the major thoroughfare moving high volumes of local, regional commuter and pass by traffic through Green Cove Springs. Eligible projects in the boundaries of the Gateway Corridor or the Central Business District could receive grant awards up to 50% of the total project cost as a reimbursement for expenditures for projects funded like landscaping, sidewalks, streetscapes, lighting, signage, facades/building improvements, and dumpster enclosures. To date, the return on investment for the program is two dollars of private investment for every one dollar of City funds invested in the projects.



From left to right: NEFRC Council President Kenny Eubanks, Green Cove Springs Councilmember Pam Lewis, Development Services Director Janis Fleet, Vice Mayor Van Royal, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple

The Regional Award for Excellence in Transportation: Baker County Council on Aging.

The Baker County Council on Aging is a non-profit organization located in the City of MacClenny and provides a number of services to the elderly population in Baker County. This entity, through its Executive Director, Jackie Wright, improved the quality of transportation available to citizens within Baker County and has impacted surrounding communities through their multi-jurisdictional approach to route optimization. The County operates the Transportation Disadvantaged program providing daily trips to various sites in Baker, Duval, Columbia and Alachua Counties. The Council on Aging contracted with the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) to provide the Wildcat Shuttle connecting MacClenny and Glen St. Mary to Baldwin on the Westside of Jacksonville and down town Jacksonville.



From left to right: NEFRC President Kenny Eubanks, From the Baker County Council on Aging Team Robert Lambright, Cherill Mobley, Tiffany Shrull, Ginny Braddock, Jackie Wright, Christina Harvey, Barbara Yarbrough, and NEFRC CEO Brian Teeple

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